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Trains Album of Photographs

BOOK IV

COLORADO

RAILROADS

Trains Album of Photographs -- Book Four

COLORADO RAILROADS

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The Finest Pictures of American Railroad Scenes.

COLORADO is the state of small gauges and big mountains, a state where the grandeur of heavy railroad operations contrasts with the picturesqueness of narrow-gauge trains winding through canyons hardly suitable for wagon trails.

We think of Colorado as a mountain state, as the top of the Rockies, but it is also a state of flat grazing and farm lands. Roughly, the eastern half is plain, the western half mountain. In the eastern half are the railroads from the Midwest to the state's big cities: Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo. These are the granger roads, hardly associated with the Colorado of the mountains. The Rock Island, the Burlington, the Missouri Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Santa Fe send their arteries into Colorado to tap the distributing centers at the east edge of the mountains.

But at the foot of the mountains start the railroads we know as Colorado's own: the Denver & Rio Grande Western, the Denver & Salt Lake (the Moffat Road), and the Colorado lines of Colorado & Southern. Right through the mountains are flung two transcontinental main lines reaching west toward Salt Lake City — the Royal Gorge Route of the D&RGW, once narrow-gauge, and the Moffat Tunnel-Dotsero Cutoff Route of the same road, newest of the transcontinentals.

It is a far cry from the historic battle for right of way in the Royal Gorge to the building of the Moffat Tunnel Route, hardly a decade ago, but Colorado covers that span.

No sight is quite as nerve-tingling as huge locomotives working in unison to lift long, heavy trains up mountain grades. There is plenty of that in Colorado. But there is not only the spirit of railroads present, but of railroads past. Colorado is a land of high mountain passes, and over every one of its mountain passes a railroad stem was projected. Many of these were built, but few are still running. The Colorado & Southern's narrow-gauge South Park line once ran over Kenosha Pass, Boreas Pass, and Fremont Pass to Leadville, and over Alpine Pass to Gunnison. Traces of the line are still easy to follow and a remnant is still operating near Denver. The Georgetown Loop, one-time scenic attraction, was abandoned not so long ago on the narrow-gauge line to Silver Plume. Where the Moffat Tunnel now burrows for six miles beneath James Peak, the D&SL once toiled over the almost-perpetual snows of Rollins Pass, more than two miles above sea level. The old roadbeds of all of these lines can still be followed.

The narrow-gauge loop of some 530 miles in the heart of the Colorado Rockies was once a tour in itself, a sidetrip necessity on any tourist ticket. The track is still there, with freight service over all its length and much of it can still be made by train to recapture the flavor of the narrow-gauge passenger train. Four engined freights still climb Marshall Pass, once the main line between Denver and Salt Lake City. The little narrow-gauge engines work in the yard at Salida, where one can see them from the observation platform of the mainline Scenic Limited.

In this album we have combined the nostalgic yesterday of Colorado railroads with the exciting today: the glistening Exposition Flyer and heavy manifest freights, the now-discontinued Shavano of the narrow-gauge and the practical Galloping Geese of the Rio Grande Southern. The pictures are the story. We know you will enjoy them, and the unique way in which they are presented. Our sincere appreciation to the photographers who cooperated in making this book possible.

Trains Albums of Photographs

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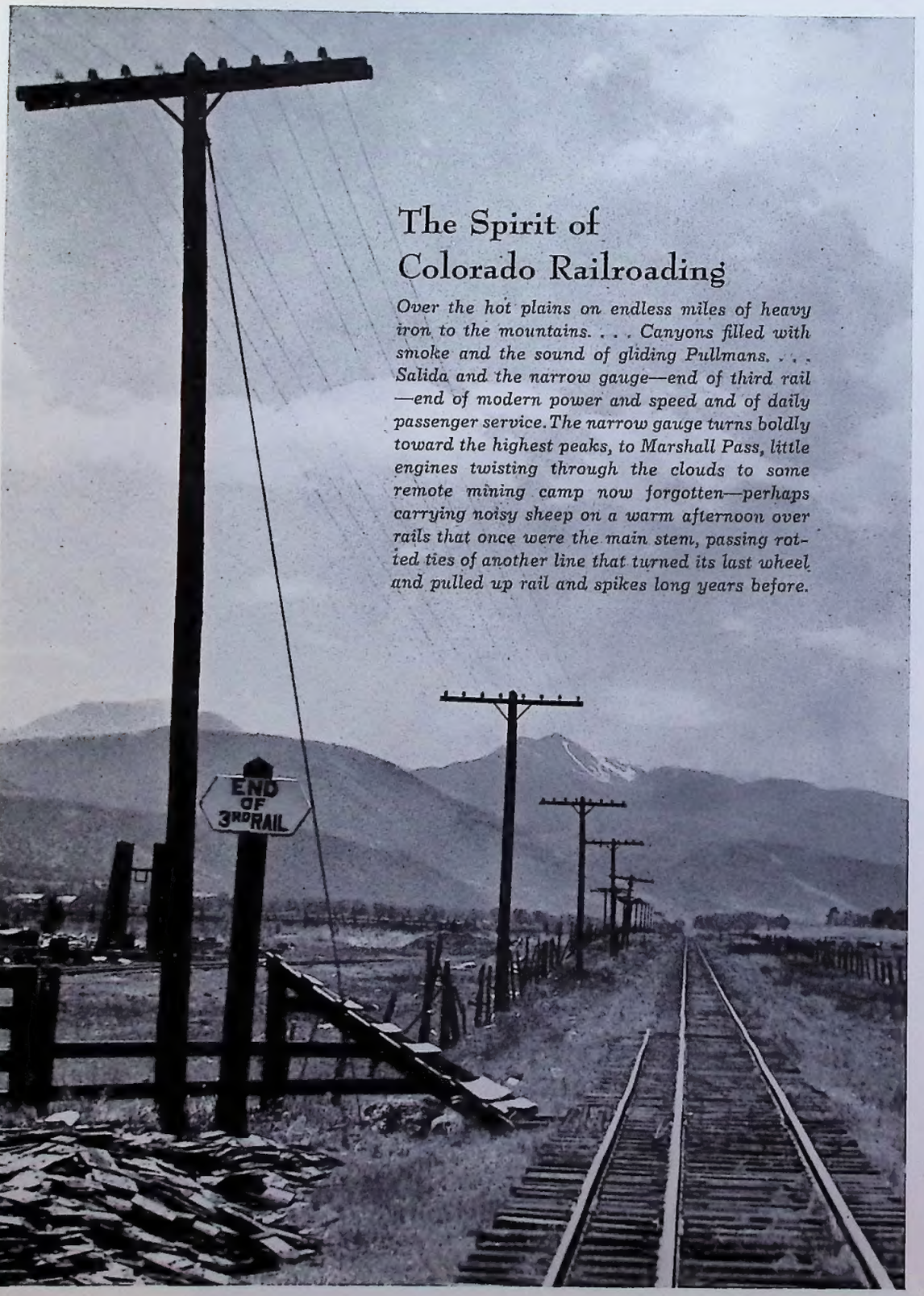
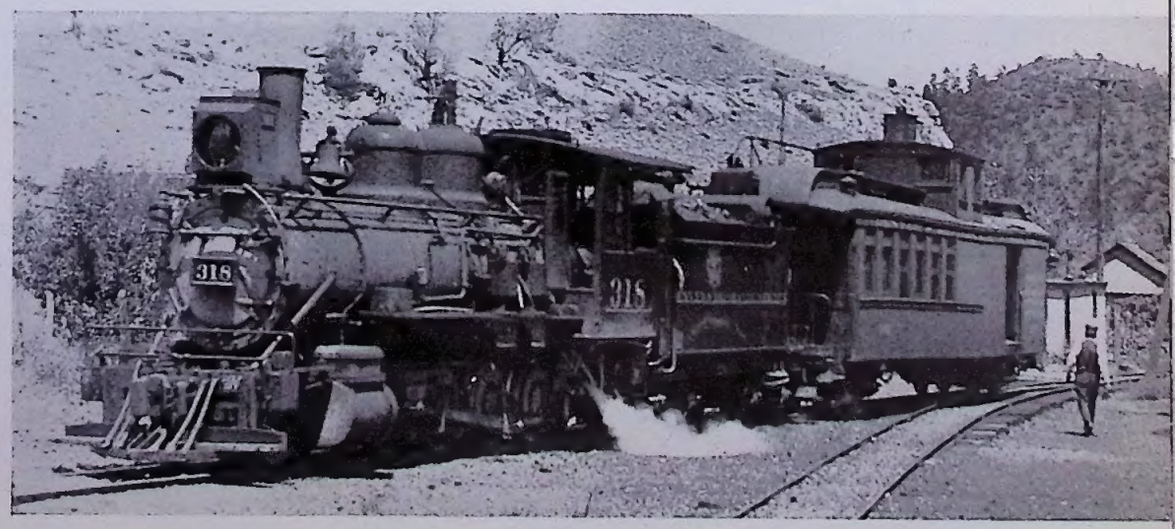


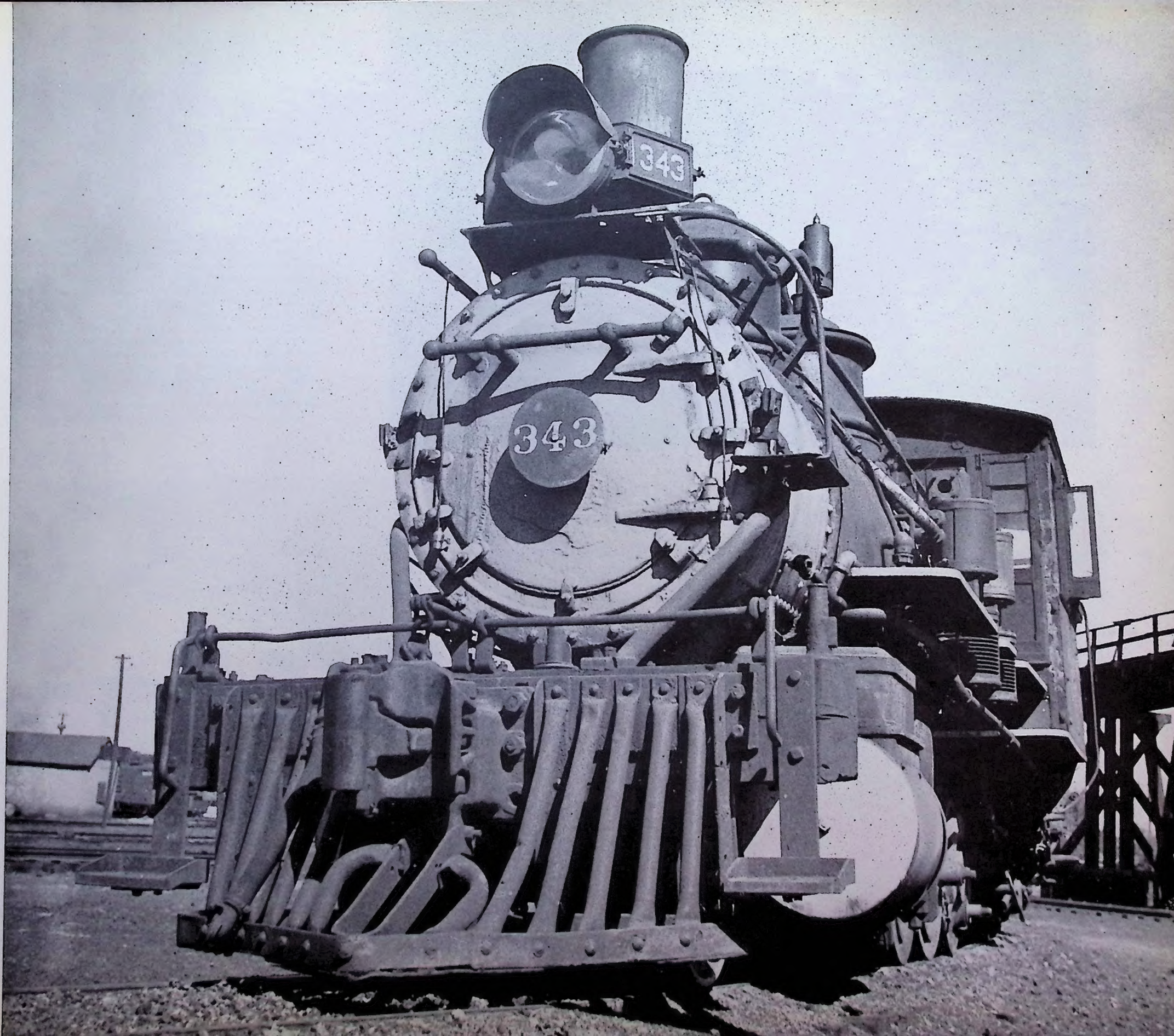
The Spirit of Colorado Railroading

Over the hot plains on endless miles of heavy iron to the mountains. . . . Canyons filled with smoke and the sound of gliding Pullmans. . . . Salida and the narrow gauge—end of third rail —end of modern power and speed and of daily passenger service. The narrow gauge turns boldly toward the highest peaks, to Marshall Pass, little engines twisting through the clouds to some remote mining camp now forgotten—perhaps carrying noisy sheep on a warm afternoon over rails that once were the main stem, passing rotted ties of another line that turned its last wheel and pulled up rail and spikes long years before.

Colorado is a land of not only railroads of today but of the abandoned railroads of yesterday. Above is a train, years ago, on the almost forgotten Colorado Springs & Cripple Creek. From the John C. Carter collection. Below is the little train which used to wait at Pagosa Junction on the Durango line of the D&RGW narrow gauge to carry mail, express, l. c. l. freight, and passengers up the branch to Pagosa Springs. By William Moedinger Jr.

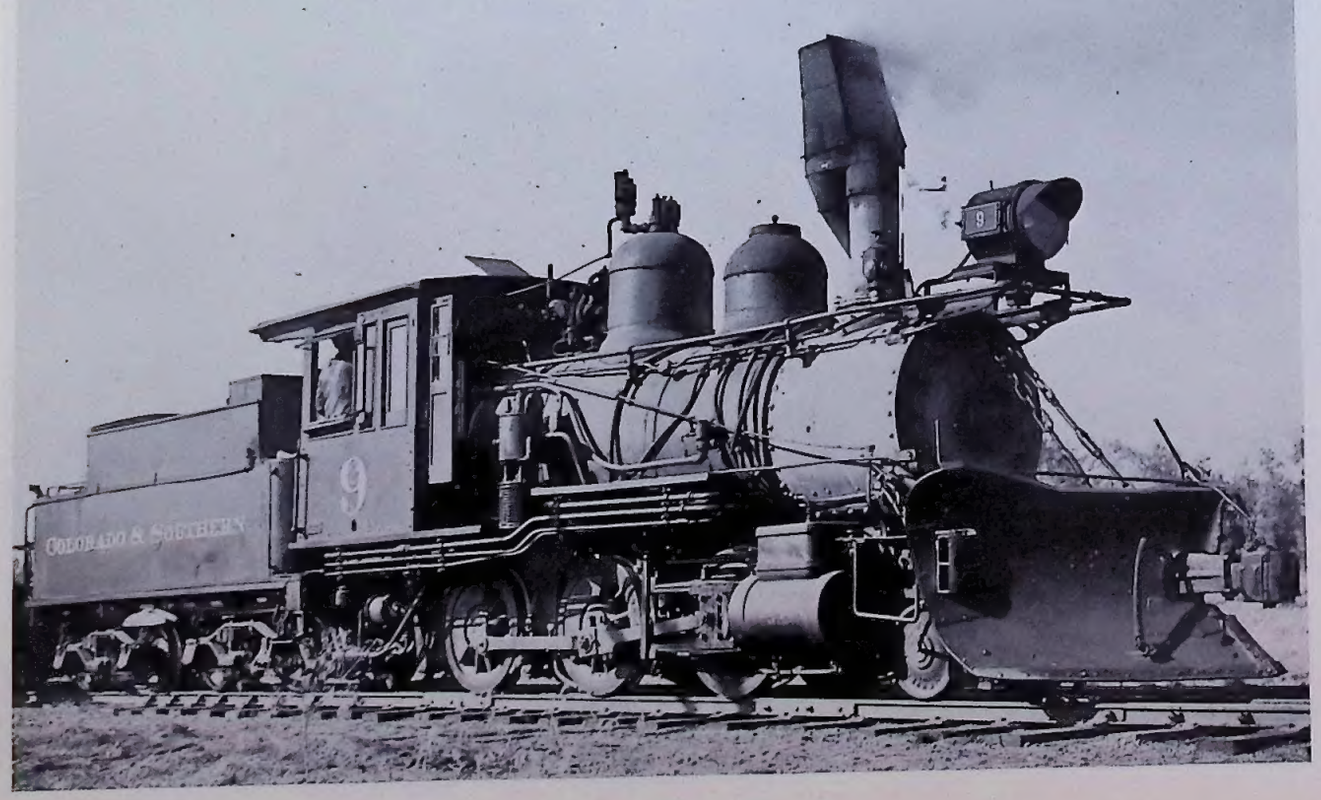
Left: At Salida, looking west toward Marshall Pass. By Linn H. Westcott.





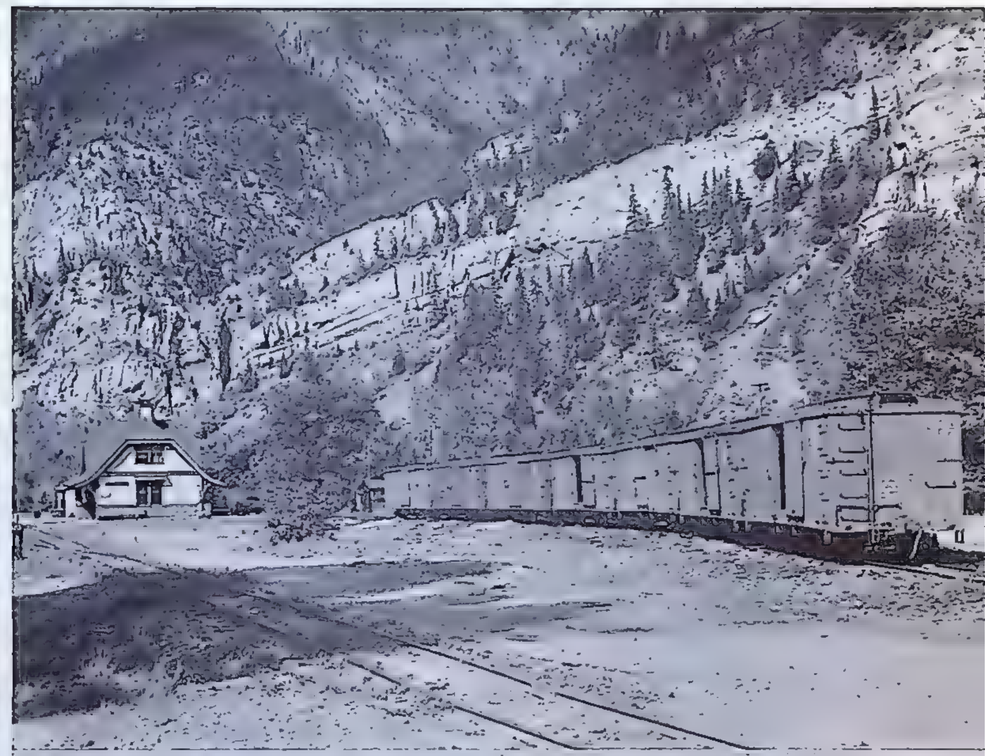
Narrow-gauge Consolidation No. 343 has been retired several years, and two years ago was resting thus at Alamosa. It was built by Baldwin in 1881 and at the time it was photographed was probably as old as any engine on the Grande property. Now it is almost certainly scrapped. By Linn H. Westcott.

Most famous of the narrow-gauge lines finally absorbed in the Colorado & Southern (Burlington system) was the Denver, South Park & Pacific, which ran southwest from Denver through the South Park (in Colorado a park is a broad, level, fertile valley) to Leadville and also on across Alpine Pass to Gunnison. At one time this road had ambitions, as did most others in Colorado, of reaching the Pacific. Later it became a part of the Union Pacific. All but a remnant of the 400 miles is now gone. Otto Perry's photo at right caught all the glory and action of the old South Park as the freight left Watertown for Denver on the portion still operating. R. H. Kindig's photo below shows a typical C&S narrow-gauge engine. The bonnet on the stack is a cinder catcher, and the stove pipe down the left side of the smoke box is to chute the cinders down to the track.



The *Shavno* was, before the abandonment of passenger service in 1940, a deluxe narrow-gauge express with refurbished cars running from Salida west over the Marshall Pass, old main line of the D&RGW. This route was replaced a half century ago for through service by the standard gauge Tennessee Pass route, but the narrow gauge still does a big local business in mining and agricultural products. The *Shavano* is shown a few minutes out of Salida By John W. Maxwell.

Most remote but most startling scenicly of the D&RGW narrow gauge lines is the branch from Durango, end of the Cumbres Pass line, to Silverton, nestled amid a cluster of 13,000-foot mountains. This line (above) follows the canyon of the Rio de Las Animas Perdidas (River of Lost Souls), at times climbing high along sheer rock walls on a ledge too narrow for even a wagon road. By William Moedinger Jr. Right: Independent narrow gauge road which completes the west end of the narrow gauge circle is the Rio Grande Southern. This timber train is pulled by a leased D&RGW engine. By Otto C. Perry.



At Ouray, Colo. (upper right), the D&RGW Ouray branch ends in a pocket of impassably high rock walls, a natural park with rocks of all colors and a waterfall gushing out high above. It was because of these impassable rock walls that the Rio Grande Southern was built farther west to close a north and south gap in railroad transportation. The other pictures are on Rio Grande Southern, above at Ophir and right at Telluride, both mining towns. Farm Security Administration Photos by Russell W. Lee.

A brakeman rides the pilot of this Rio Grande Southern locomotive not to view the gorgeous scenery or to enjoy the clear mountain air, but to watch for rocks which may have fallen on the track. The train is bucking the tough grade toward the summit of Dallas Divide just east of Brown, Colo. The timber trestle is typical of Rio Grande Southern and so is the scenery. This is the plucky little road which has survived not only receivership but losses which would have made another road give up years ago. Aggressive management and ideas like the homemade Galloping Geese motor cars for passenger, mail and express traffic have kept the trains running. By William Moedinger Jr.

North and south, from the intermountain region of central Colorado into the Rio Grande valley of New Mexico, ran the D&RGW's Santa Fe narrow gauge branch, from present-day Colorado to the old Spanish atmosphere of Embudo and Santa Fe. The line was abandoned in 1941. Here the train to Santa Fe follows the waterlevel grade along the bank of the Rio Grande. By Otto C. Perry.

Even in the desert locomotives need water, and 471, a "sports model" Mikado on the narrow gauge D&RGW line to Santa Fe gets hers from a water tank in the Rio Grande valley near the south end of the line. In this dry country locomotive water becomes a major operating consideration and superintendents can never forget that for every pound of coal burned a locomotive uses nearly eight pounds of water. By John Maxwell.

Little old Ten-Wheelers like the 169 sometimes work the narrow gauge mixed trains on branch lines of the D&RGW. This one is pulling train No. 426 up the now-abandoned grade north of Santa Fe, N. M. By Otto C. Perry.

Out of a snow framed tunnel on the Silverton Branch of the D&RGW steams narrow gauge No. 227, a Grant engine. These little engines are the mechanical version of the mountain mule, and have hauled plenty of freight through almost impassable country since the first Rocky Mountain narrow gauge lines were built 70 years ago. From Jack Thode collection.

This Denver & Rio Grande Western freight is breaking the silence of the Sawatch Mountains just north of Tennessee Pass. Engine 3602 and helper 3605 are Class L-131, 2-8-8-2 articulateds. Their combined tractive power, 263,000 pounds, moves this 48-car train up the 3 per cent grade at 15 miles per hour. The old narrow gauge line zigzagged from side to side in this valley and did not go through tunnel at the summit. Both by R. H. Kindig.

Trailing its string of freight, Denver & Rio Grande Western articulated No. 3615 swings its bulk around curves, under jutting cliffs, and over bridges and trestles fighting its way up South Boulder Creek Valley to the East Portal of the Moffat Tunnel. No other sight can tingle the senses as does a giant locomotive battling mountain grades, the cannonading of its exhaust echoing from one rocky slope to another. By Lieut. John Maxwell.

Until the six-mile Moffat Tunnel was first used in 1928, trains of the Denver & Salt Lake Railroad crossed the Continental Divide at Corona on Rollins Pass, 50 miles northwest of Denver. This was the top of the world for United States railroads, elevation 11,680 feet, a torturous, winding, almost perpetually snowbound route which was a pain to operating men and red ink to the front office. Now it is all gone. The photo at lower right shows part of the loop on the old line. Track in the foreground curves around to cross the trestle over Gunsight Notch in background. It then loops to come toward the photographer through tunnel below the same trestle, shown close up above. The Moffat Tunnel was finished in 1928. The Dotsero Cutoff, connecting it with through D&RGW tracks to Salt Lake City, was finished in 1934. Yet such is the expense, and in these times the risk, of starting a new transcontinental train, that it took the San Francisco Golden Gate Exposition of 1939 to inspire the first passenger train *(Exposition Flyer,* above right at tunnel No. 8) from Chicago to the West Coast routed this way. Above, by Linn H. Westcott. Upper right by R. H. Kindig. Lower right by L. C. McClure.

The above view is from the observation solarium of the *Exposition Flyer* as it stops for water at Coal Creek, 22 miles west of Denver. The train has crossed the last of the plains in the distance and is now climbing the escarpment of the Rockies. Beyond Coal Creek is Tunnel No. 1 and then miles of winding, climbing track to the east portal of the Moffat Tunnel. By A. C. Kalmbach. Below is a rotary snowplow unit working on the old Moffat road which crossed Rollins Pass before the Moffat Tunnel was holed through. By L. C. McClure.

The Denver & Salt Lake climbs the escarpment of the Rockies, scaling the very face of the rocky bluffs themselves. At Tunnel No. 6 (above) the railroad is still on the very edge of the mountains. A glance out of the car window (right) shows geography in the raw. Far below in the foothills and farther up, almost in the foreground, winds an abandoned railroad grade. Both by L. C. McClure.

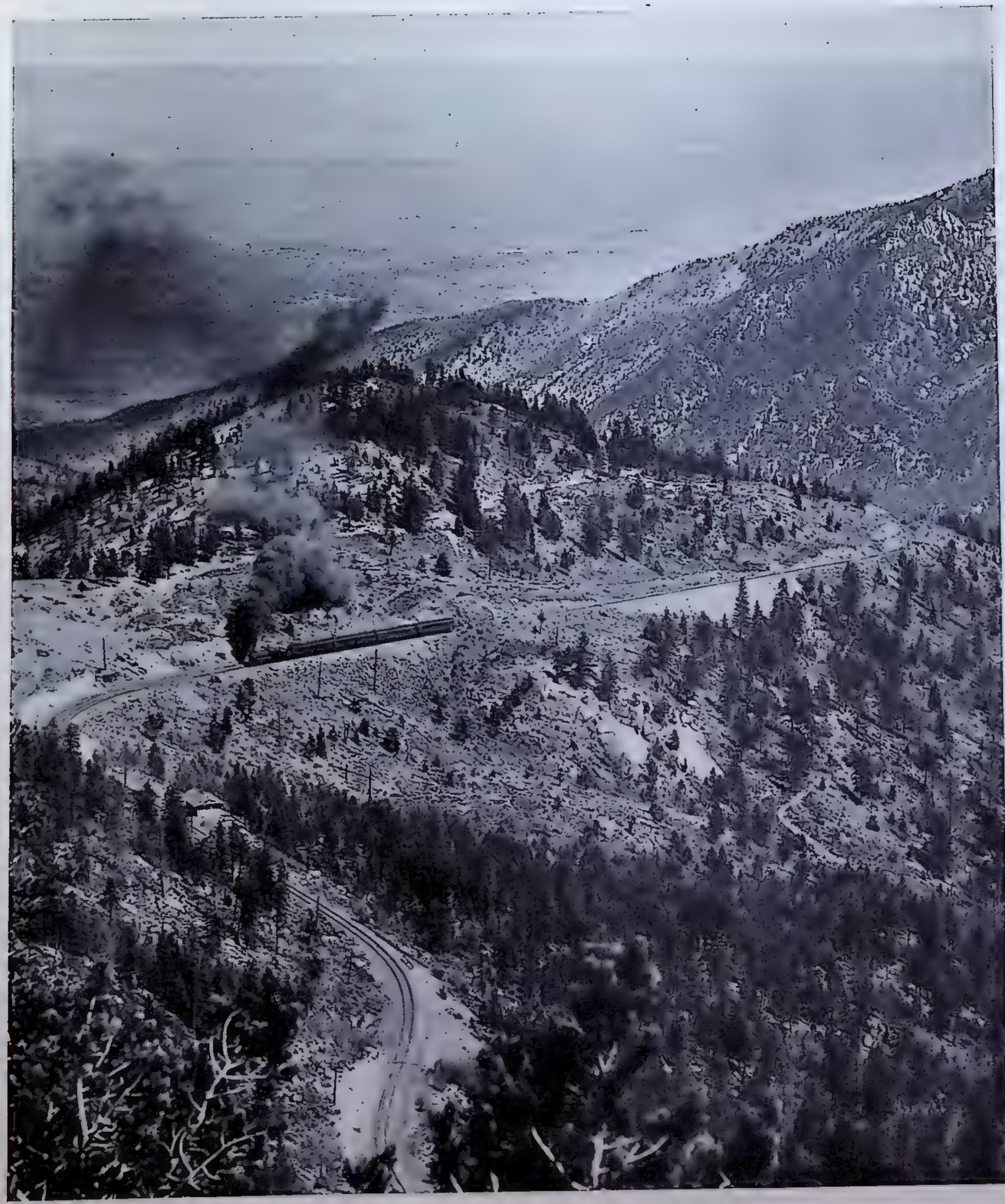
The huge front cylinders of the Denver & Rio Grande Western locomotive at left mark it as a Mallet articulated compound. It is climbing toward the Moffat Tunnel on the Denver & Salt Lake, over which the D&RGW has running rights in order to reach the Dotsero cutoff on its short route from Denver to Salt Lake City. The engine below is pulling a freight train just west of Durango on the narrow gauge Rio Grande Southern. Both by R. H. Kindig.

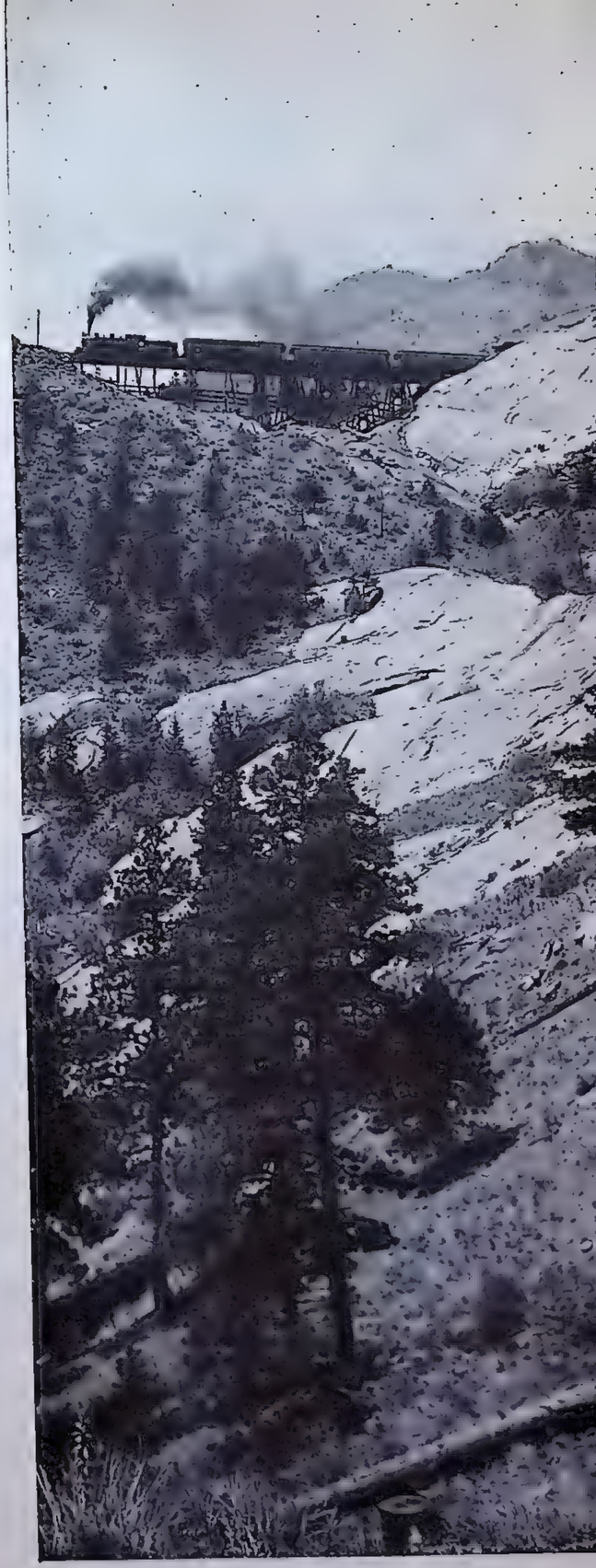
Cripple Creek with its rich ores was a mecca for railroads. The Short Line came in from the east, the Midland Terminal from the north. From the south came the narrow-gauge Florence & Cripple Creek, long since abandoned. At left the Florence and Cripple Creek winds around Lone Tree Rock, one of the obstacles that must have driven the surveyors crazy when the line was laid out. Above: Two F&CC trains are on the double bow knot which lifted the line out of a narrowing canyon. The upper train is an upgrade freight, the lower a downgrade passenger carrying, probably, miners and tourists. The right of way is now a beautiful mountain highway from Florence to Cripple Creek. Both by L. C. McClure.

A Florence & Cripple Creek narrow-gauge passenger train rounding a mountainside curve high up on the double bowknot by which the road climbed over the divide between Cripple Creek and Florence. This locomotive is now on the Rio Grande Southern. Depletion of the Cripple Creek mines and competition with standard-gauge roads brought about the abandonment of the F&CC. By L. C. McClure.

The Colorado Springs & Cripple Creek Short Line is a forgotten railroad. In the early years of this century it did a big business in ore from the Cripple Creek mines, but was later abandoned. Scenic attractions along the line included the Cathedral Rocks, left (from John C. Carter collection) as they looked when the railroad was running, and right (by Linn H. Westcott) as they look today with a highway on the abandoned right of way.

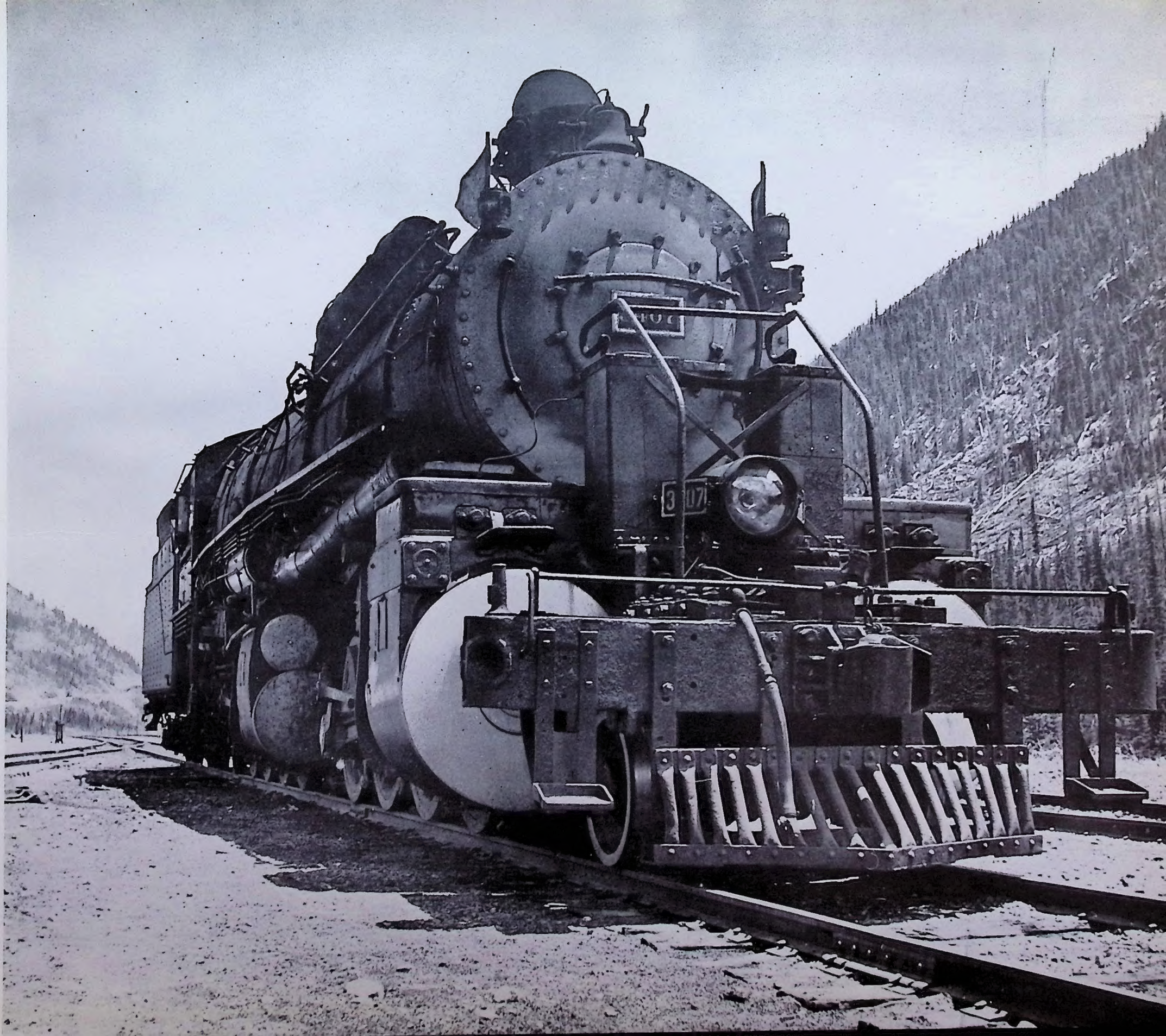
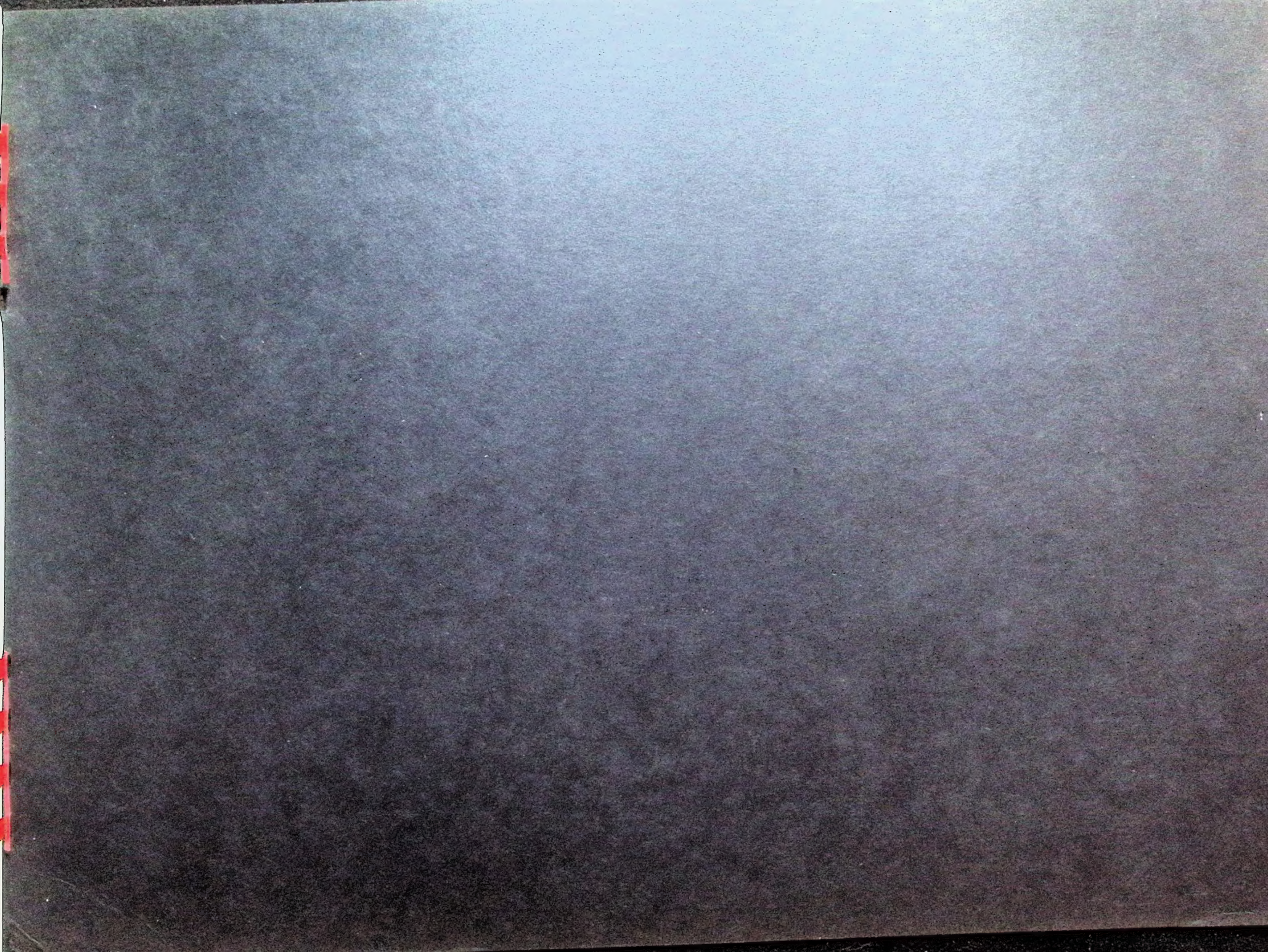
Another much advertised attraction on this scenic mining road was St. Peter's Dome. A returning train of empty ore cars with its pusher engine blasts against the crags with its engine exhausts. By L. C. McClure.





Two views of the Colorado Springs & Cripple Creek District (Short Line) which climbed spectacularly from Colorado Springs on the edge of the plain to Cripple Creek in the mountains. To the left is the last view from the railroad toward the plain. The photo to right shows how the CS&CCD clung to the sides of steep cliffs. Most of the track was on 4 per cent grades. After abandonment in 1923 it was torn up by a Mr. Corley and the Corley highway was laid over the grade. Both by L. C. McClure.

Like a fleeing deer this Colorado Midland freight lopes along the mountainside near Hell Gate back in the 1890's. The 337-mile Midland was abandoned, except for a short section sold to the Midland Terminal, in 1918, largest complete abandonment in the United States. The photo was taken by William Henry Jackson, greatest of all Western photographers, and is from the Denver Public Library Western Collection.



No. 3407 is a Denver & Rio Grande Western Mallet articulated, waiting near the east portal of the Moffat Tunnel after pushing a train up the hill. Notice the huge front cylinders which mark a true Mallet, or compound, articulated engine. By Linn H. Westcott.